The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by the Chairman, Mr. Gidwitz, who asked Judy Carmody, the staff secretary to the Board, to call the roll. Mrs. Carmody called the roll of members. A quorum was present.

*Chairman Gidwitz indicated that Dr. Steiner was unable to be present on March 21 but would be in attendance on Thursday (March 22).

The Chairman called for Agenda Item A., School Designation System Update.

Chairman Gidwitz indicated that in October, the State Board reviewed the School Designation Task Force report and adopted fourteen recommendations made by that Task Force. He reported that the Board had asked the Superintendent to proceed with planning for implementation of those recommendations. He noted that at this time, the Board would discuss the status of activity related to implementation of those recommendations.

Superintendent McGee indicated that Michael Dunn, Chief Education Officer, and Deputy Superintendent Carmen Chapman Pfeiffer had assumed the leadership role in the design of the School Designation System. He reported that several meetings have been convened to further clarify issues and identify implementation steps. He noted that conversations focused on a variety of points with special emphasis on indicators for improvement and rewards and sanctions per the Board’s request in October.

The Superintendent commented that at this meeting, an update would be shared on the status of the School Designation System, and we would like to obtain input
regarding the implementation plan. He noted that the intent is to provide a full implementation plan in June.

Michael Dunn and Carmen Pfeiffer highlighted some of the major observations and themes from the groups.

Discussion followed with Board members’ providing input and sharing their concerns.

An audio tape of the meeting is available through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).

FAAS

The Chairman called for Agenda Item B., Financial Accountability and Assurance System.

Chairman Gidwitz indicated that at this time, there would be a rather extended discussion regarding the financial health of Illinois public school districts. He noted that in keeping with past practice, we would also be preparing for adoption of the 2001 Financial Watch, Financially Certified School District, and Financial Oversight Panel Lists.

Superintendent McGee reported that at this meeting, we would not only hear about the financial health of schools but would also have the opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by two school districts (Decatur and Homewood) as they provide a standards-based education to their students.

Deputy Superintendent Gary Ey and Division Administrator Chuck Schmitt provided a power-point presentation, reviewing the fiscal health of Illinois schools that included ILEARN enhancements (see Addendum II).

Discussion followed with Board members' providing input and sharing their concerns.

The meeting recessed at 3:20 p.m. and reconvened at 3:25 p.m.

The following individuals provided information on the financial health of their respective schools districts. A copy of the materials distributed is available upon request through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).

- Decatur Public School District #61 -- Kenneth Arndt, Superintendent; Martin Getty, Director of Business Affairs; and Jacqueline Goetter, president of the Board
- Homewood School District #153 -- Ed Wahl, Assistant Superintendent
The Superintendent thanked the individuals for their participation in the Board meeting. He indicated that as the Chairman had mentioned, on March 22, he would be recommending adoption of the 2001 Financial Watch, Certified School District, and Oversight Panel Lists.

An audio tape of the meeting is available through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).

**Technology Plan**

The Chairman called for Agenda Item C., Five Year Statewide Technology Plan.

Chairman Gidwitz indicated that the Board's final agenda item surrounds the statewide Technology Plan to be adopted in 2001. He noted that this discussion would focus on the Plan content and the development activity since the November Board meeting when we had the last update.

Superintendent McGee introduced Lugene Finley, Chief Technology Officer, and Vicki DeWitt and Kathy Bjelland, Directors of Area 4 and Area 5 Learning Technology Centers. He reported that during the November discussion, a great deal of input was provided to Ms. DeWitt and Ms. Bjelland on the Technology Plan. He indicated that since that time they have been persistent in obtaining consensus from the Technology Coalition members and others, as well as drafting a plan to present to the State Board.

The Superintendent thanked Ms. DeWitt and Ms. Bjelland for their leadership and dedication to producing what would be the future direction for technology in the schools. He also expressed appreciation for their efforts.

Mr. Finley, Ms. DeWitt, and Ms. Bjelland provided an overview of the Plan.

Discussion followed with Board members providing their input and expressing their concerns.

Discussion surrounding the use of this Plan as a "consensus" document, enhancing the vision of the Plan, and the process for finalizing the Plan followed.

It was agreed that a letter would be developed and disseminated reflecting the status of the Technology Plan development.

Division Administrator Frank Whitney assisted in responding to Board members' questions.

An audio tape of the meeting is available through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).
Staff Recognition

The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Recognition of Frank Whitney (not on published agenda).

Superintendent Mcgee indicated that he always does kudos during the Plenary Session for the outstanding work of staff. He commented that he would like to do a special kudo at this meeting and personally thank Division Administrator Frank Whitney for his leadership and hard work in building the state's internet. He presented Mr. Whitney with a customized poster, recognizing his leadership in initiating the state infrastructure.

Closed Meeting

The Chairman asked for a motion for the Board to go into a closed meeting.

Motion

Mr. Serritella moved that "the State Board of Education go into a closed meeting on March 21 at 5:00 p.m. or immediately following Work-Study Session I and on March 22 at 7:30 a.m. under the exceptions set forth in the Open Meetings Act of the State of Illinois as follows:

-- Section 2 (c) (1) for the purpose of discussing information regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee; and
-- Section 2 (c) (11) for the purpose of discussing litigation.

He further moved that Superintendent Mcgee be included in this meeting and that the Board be authorized to invite anyone else into the meeting as needed."

Mrs. Rogers seconded the motion.

Vote on Motion

The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes  Mrs. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Mrs. Turkal - yes

Chairman Gidwitz announced that on March 22, Work-Study Session II would begin at 9:30 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 5:10 p.m. and reconvened into a closed meeting at 5:15 p.m. The closed meeting recessed at 6:00 p.m. and reconvened on March 22 at 7:30 a.m.
Adjournment  The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

__________________________
Connie Rogers, Secretary

__________________________
Ronald J. Gidwitz, Chairman